WMD Pre-Incident Planning Introduction

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Lesson Administration Page

Module: WMD Pre-Incident Planning Introduction

Scope: This module introduces the necessity of WMD pre-incident planning. It provides the responder with an understanding of the purpose, components, and complexities of constructing a competent planning system.

Instruction Objective(s):

Terminal Learning Objective: At the conclusion of this module, the responder will identify the requirements for pre-incident planning and developing a WMD incident response plan.

Enabling Learning Objective 1: Explain the importance of pre-incident planning

Practical Exercise: None

References:

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- Engineering and Safety Service. *Emergency Response Recovery Operations.* Natural Hazards Report, NH-20-14. New York: AISG, 2000.

- Environmental Protection Agency. EPA Emergency Response Programs. <http://www.epa.gov/swercepp/er-feco.htm>.

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- Federal Emergency Management Agency. *Emergency Management Guide for Business and Industry* < http://www.fema.gov/library/bizindst.pdf>.

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- Occupational Safety and Health Administration. *How to Prepare for Workplace Emergencies*. Washington: OSHA 3088. 1995.

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- Wold, Geoffrey H., and Shriver, Robert F. *Disaster Proof Your Business*. Chicago: Probus Publishing Company, 1991.

- Lanford, Robert. "Prepare to be a Terrorist Target," *Responder*, February 1998.

Duration: .25 Hours

Method of Instruction: Facilitated seminar

Instructor Ratio: 1:50 for large group instruction and 1:10 for small group instruction

Required Reading Assignment(s): None

Evaluation Strategy: Hands-on performance is measured by instructor evaluation of the tasks performed. The overall course presentation and relevance are evaluated through feedback offered at After Training Reviews (ATR), end-of-course critiques, and follow-on evaluations completed by all attendees.

WMD Incident Command Course

Introduction

Emergencies can take many forms: physical perils such as fires, floods, or earthquakes; work accidents; walk-outs or other labor problems; loss of essential supplies and utilities such as electricity; or deliberate acts of terrorism or sabotage. In fact, any sort of emergency that happens suddenly, disrupts the routine of daily activities, jeopardizes the community's living and economic position, and demands immediate attention can be considered a crisis. Though some emergencies give advanced warnings of several days, others come unexpectedly—varying in degree and level of impact. Large-scale or catastrophic emergencies are referred to as disasters. *Failure to plan is a plan for failure.*

Pre-incident planning is essential for successfully minimizing any adverse effects on community activities. Being unprepared can lead not only to significant interruptions, but also to loss of assets and human life. By being prepared for expected emergencies, communities are better suited to deal with unexpected and unforeseeable emergencies. To help communities prepare for emergencies, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) requires communities to develop hazardous materials emergency plans, and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) requires the development of emergency operations plans.

> *No plan will answer all the questions, or prepare our emergency responses for all the possibilities. But as a team of emergency response agencies we should be able to look at our communities and begin preparing for a response. The morning after the incident has happened, your department members, local citizens, and political leaders will be reading about the event in the local papers and seeing it on the news. How well you prepared for the event before it happened will parallel how well the incident itself was coordinated and executed.*
>
> *—Robert Lanford*

Many terms are used to describe emergency planning—contingency planning, disaster recovery planning, crisis management, etc. These different terms essentially describe ways of protecting life and property. Because these terms are similar, they are frequently used interchangeably, yet they are all subtly different in scope.

Notes

Terms such as *contingency planning* and *crisis management* focus on the preparation for, or response to, an event. *Disaster recovery planning* focuses on restoring operations after a natural disaster has occurred. WMD incident response pre-incident planning is a risk management philosophy concerned with the anticipation of, preparation for, response to, and recovery from a WMD event. This term is used commonly throughout this training and associated training materials. WMD incident response pre-incident planning is the methodology used to develop a coherent system or program for becoming prepared.
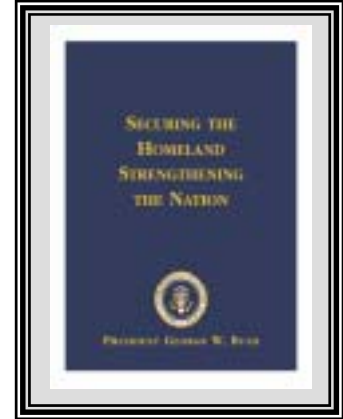
WMD Incident Response Pre-Incident Planning

WMD incident response pre-incident planning has one goal: to minimize the adverse effects of a WMD terrorist attack. This goal is accomplished through a program created to assess the threat, vulnerability, and risk of potential emergencies and to develop a strategy for mitigating any associated risk.

The strategy is implemented through the development of a WMD incident response pre-incident planning methodology. This methodology explains the specific actions that must be taken to develop an incident response plan. The methodology outlines responsibilities before, during, and after a WMD attack and assigns responsibility for implementing response actions.

There is no single emergency plan that can be adapted to all communities and situations; all communities are different, having varied concerns and available resources. Though the general procedures for developing an incident plan are universally adaptive, the use of a single, generic emergency plan could result in situations where the resources necessary to implement a required action are not available. There are eight essential elements of emergency preparedness planning:

- Identify the planning team
- Analyzing and assessing the threat
- Identify the potential targets
- Conduct drills and exercises

- Conducting resource and capability assessments
- Developing the WMD incident response plan
- Conduct training
- Conducting vulnerability and risk assessments

Notes

Develop Plan Audit Procedures

It is important that everyone understands that the plan *does not* deal with normal day-to-day operations, which are not emergencies. The plan will state, in writing, the policy and procedures for responding to WMD attacks and state all necessary procedures and requirements, including training requirements. The magnitude of the plan is self-evident and must be underscored by each planner throughout each phase of the planning process.

The steps taken before and after plan writing are equally important. A WMD incident response plan is only as good as the information upon which it is based and the ability for a community to implement it. A plan must be realistic and not assume that certain response capabilities exist.

An effective audit procedure is essential for plan longevity. When planning, one must remember that communities are dynamic and that their needs and resources fluctuate with time. The plan must be current so that it accurately addresses the community's immediate needs; otherwise, the plan will become outdated. An outdated emergency plan may be as useless as not having one at all.

Plan Development

Planning can prevent poor performance once a crisis happens. Exercising those plans regularly will enhance their effectiveness. Experience has shown that action in emergencies is seldom effective unless planned and exercised in advance. For example, the McKinsey & Company report of fire/EMS response to the 9-11 World Trade Center attacks demonstrated that even though an extensive emergency plan had been in place in New York City for over two years, the plan had been exercised only one time, and nothing beyond a "table-top" scenario was used. The importance of full-size, real-time, first responder-based exercises was fully realized.

The planning stages are where mistakes can be explored and addressed without risk to responders. The longer it takes to react effectively, the greater the potential for loss. Communities unfamiliar with proper crisis management procedures may worsen an already unfavorable situation.

Notes

Getting Started

The first step in developing an incident preparedness program is to appoint a leader to assume responsibility for the plan; this person will develop the planning team and act as its coordinator. The leader is responsible for overseeing the team's efforts throughout the entire planning process. He or she is responsible for coordinating all activities within the project and providing general direction for the process.

The appointment may be made in any number of ways (but preferably in writing), and should be issued from the highest authority in the community. The appointment should provide a detailed outline of the leader's responsibilities and authority, establish program direction, and emphasize the complete support of top officials. Top officials must be competent individuals committed to the idea of incident planning or necessary resources may not be available to complete the task.

The elected leader should be someone who knows the community well and has experience in dealing with problems and making decisions, while being capable of dealing effectively with community leaders and employees at all levels.

Since this leader will have to be able to delegate authority and speak for the jurisdictional authority, he or she should be a senior member of the emergency response community—although this is not a requirement. The appointed leader should be a well-rounded person, able to demonstrate a mastery of technical expertise and writing ability. Because the role of the leader is so significant, an alternate or co-leader may also be chosen to assist in the various responsibilities that the leader will assume.

A team comprised of representatives from key departments and agencies should be selected to assist and advise the leader and help organize the plan. The representatives should be drawn from all areas of the community that could be affected by a crisis or would have a role in response and recovery activities.

Notes

Among the various representative departments that could be affected and might contribute are:

- Fire Service
- Hazardous Materials Response
- Law Enforcement
- Emergency Medical Service
- Public Information
- Civil Engineering
- Emergency Management
- Public Works and Utilities
- District Attorney's Office
- Finance and Accounting
- Veterinarian
- Environmental

- Public Health
- Hospitals
- Communication/911 Director
- Businesses/Industries
- Media
- Elected Offices
- Human Resources
- Information Technologies
- Volunteer Organizations
- Red Cross
- United Way
- Other agencies as required

In smaller communities, one person may be responsible for more than one of the aforementioned areas. The number of people chosen for the group is not important, provided the people have experience in these areas. If in-house resources cannot provide this expertise, outside consultants should be utilized.

A single person should not, however, be relied upon too heavily to develop the entire program. For effective planning, communities need to know who is responsible for what and who can perform what activities; this knowledge is gained only through team participation. Single-person plans are ineffective, being incomplete or biased.

When establishing a team, a new organization is not created to manage emergencies. *The purpose of developing a preparedness program is to highlight potential problems and to provide an existing organization with the ability to deal with emergencies.*

Notes

Goals of the Planning Team

The planning team has the responsibility of using the emergency operations plan and terrorism annex to develop incident response plan(s) for their community. The team must anticipate what might occur and then develop response mechanisms and procedures for them. They are responsible for making sure the appropriate personnel, equipment, supplies, and organizational structure are in place for implementing their recommendations, and they must make sure procedures are current. These goals can be accomplished by following the eight planning elements stated earlier.

Once assembled, the team conducts an analysis that identifies and evaluates vulnerabilities, determines the consequences of a possible a terrorist attack, and assesses potential risks. The purpose of these steps is twofold, to ensure:

- That all voids are considered when preparing the response plan

- That planning resources are allocated properly

Thorough analyses are critical to effective emergency preparedness. Teams must anticipate the occurrence of potential events and focus time and resources to develop strategies to deal with only these events; it is pointless to waste resources preparing for an event that will not occur or is of little consequence.

Evaluation

Evaluation has several steps: the evaluation of an occurrence's probability and the identification of any threat, vulnerability, or risk. Team members should participate in brainstorming sessions to identify all events that could lead to undesirable consequences. Terrorism related hazards result from:

- Fires or explosions

- Utility outages—loss of electricity, heat, steam, refrigeration, gas, etc.

- Hazardous material releases

- Bomb threats

- Civil disturbances—riot, strike, sabotage, etc.

Notes

Identification should be made independently of whether hazards are likely to occur. The purpose of this step is strictly to discover any potential problems.

Probability Assessment

Once potential hazards are determined, they must be evaluated in terms of their probability and frequency of occurrence. Numerous methods exist for determining the probability and frequency of an event occurrence; they range from the very simple (e.g., qualitatively ranking events in terms of frequency, probability, occasion, unlikelihood, etc.) to the very complex (e.g., determining numerical probabilities for events occurring).

The method chosen will depend on the needs and sophistication of the community. Not every community needs to perform complex probability assessments. The purpose of doing any assessment is to develop a realistic list of WMD hazards that could affect a community.

Consequence Analysis

Once hazards are evaluated in terms of likelihood of occurrence, they should be evaluated in terms of the consequences of each occurrence. Team members should question how the community, people, environment, and neighboring jurisdictions would be affected if a given event occurred.

As with probability assessments, there are numerous methods for making formal consequence assessments. One such method explores the potential consequences of an event on personnel, property, the public, and the environment. It estimates the potential severity of the consequence in terms of catastrophe, criticality, marginality, negligibility, and so forth.

Risk Assessment

Once all potential hazards are identified and their consequences determined, they should be evaluated in terms of the risks they present to people and neighboring communities. Development of risk matrices for each hazard is a simple procedure to determine risk. Events requiring first consideration are those occurring most frequently and causing the greatest damage. Events occurring infrequently and causing only minimal damage are least important in order of consideration.

Notes

The purpose of performing this assessment is to rank potential hazards in terms of potential loss, so that action and response priorities can be established. No community has unlimited resources; risk assessment allows communities to effectively allocate those resources that are available.

Capabilities and Resources Assessment

Once the team completes a hazard evaluation and risk analysis, it assesses its preparedness, prevention, and response capabilities. If one of the identified hazards occurs, determine if the proper equipment and materials for responding to the event are readily available. If the equipment is not available, ensure it can be obtained, that personnel know how to use it, and that a chain of command is identified and established.

Two types of resources must be inventoried: equipment and personnel. All equipment that can be used to prevent or respond to an emergency should be noted. A survey should be made of existing communications equipment, medical equipment, first aid supplies, respirators, and PPE. Equipment used to train personnel should be listed as well. If the survey is done based on inventory logs, a physical inspection should be done to verify the equipment. When performing this review, it is important to note the lack of required equipment.

Once a complete review of equipment is accomplished, the group will have a better idea about which equipment they have and which they might need. They can then make recommendations regarding the purchase of additional equipment, if required.

The team should, then, assess the number of responders on site and their abilities. With respect to limitations, be certain the appropriate people staff only those positions suitable for them. This information will be very important in deciding which courses of action should be taken before and during a crisis. When setting up an emergency response structure, it is important to know which responders have special skills that could be utilized. Unskilled responders could benefit from training programs designed to provide them with opportunities to develop new expertise.

A plan that requires unavailable materials or personnel can be as useless during an emergency as no plan at all. The next step in this process is the actual development of the IRP.
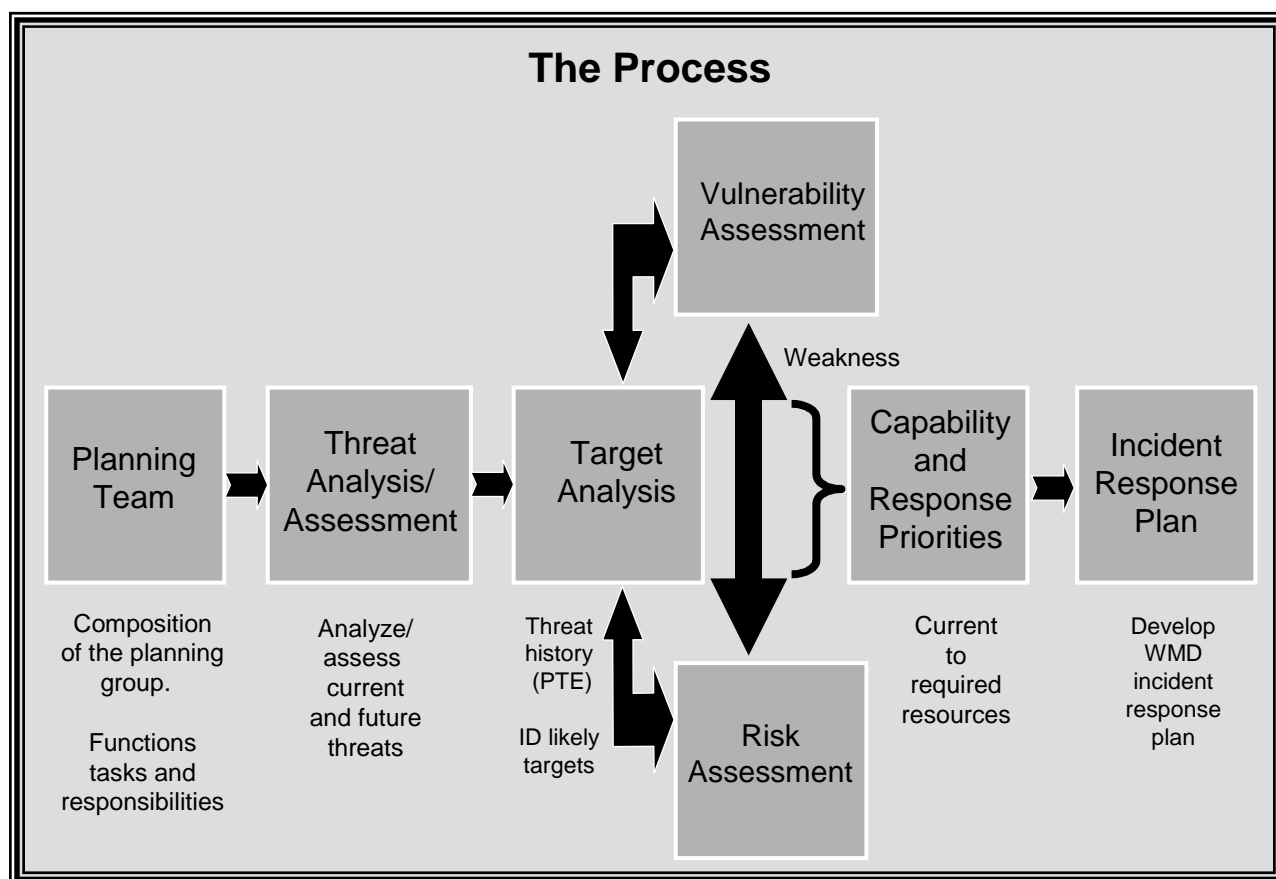
Notes

WMD Incident Command Course

The IRP is part of the Emergency Operations Plan (EOP), an umbrella document outlining community emergency response. IRPs supplementing an EOP explain how the community should respond to a specific event or incident. The EOP, through its annexes (plans), addresses earthquakes, floods, tornados, and major fires. The terrorism annex is another element within the EOP that defines how the community will respond to an act of terrorism using WMD. The terrorism annex differs from an IRP in that a terrorism annex lays out a plan for action and resources, but does not address a specific anticipated event.

In following sessions, the activities depicted in the graph below connect each session with the previous in order to complete an analysis so that an annex can be designed.

The Process

Vulnerability Assessment

Weakness

| Planning Team | Threat Analysis/ Assessment | Target Analysis | Capability and Response Priorities | Incident Response Plan |

Risk Assessment

Composition of the planning group.

Functions tasks and responsibilities

Analyze/ assess current and future threats

Threat history (PTE)

ID likely targets

Current to required resources

Develop WMD incident response plan

Notes

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